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ABSTRACT

This volume contains a series of seminars on parenting presented by the North Haven Right to Read Advisory Council. The major theme of the seminars is the role of the parent in stimulating the child's total development: emotional, social, and intellectual. Specific topics examined are: (1) the young child's view of himself: his basis for learning, (2) infant play, (3) parental involvement in the learning process, (4) parents' role in the preschoolers' learning ability--danger signals, and (5) effects of television on young children. (JMB)

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SEMINARS IN PARENTING

A RIGHT TO READ PUBLICATION

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ROXANNE TUREKIAN
and
GWENDOLYN WORKMAN
Editors

Co-Chairmen Preschool
North Haven Right to Read Advisory Council

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JUDY SILVERMAN

CONTRIBUTORS

Authors

KIRSTEN DAHL, Research Associate in Child Development,
Child Study Center, Yale University

JEAN RUSTICI, Early Childhood Consultant,
Connecticut State Department of Education, Hartford

JOHN SCHOWALTER, M.D., Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and
Psychiatry, Child Study Center, Yale University

JUDY SILVERMAN, Assistant Director of Gesell Nursery School,
New Haven

CAROLYN E. WILLIAMS, Early Childhood Consultant,
Connecticut State Department of Education, Stamford

Prepared with the cooperation of the North Haven Right to Read
Advisory Council

PREFACE

The North Haven Right to Read Advisory Council is a community effort represented by professional and non-professional segments of the North Haven population. It is part of a nationwide effort focussed on eliminating illiteracy and "improving reading instruction for all age groups".

Through an early assessment of community needs and interests in North Haven, the preschool years were targeted as a time of particular importance. The major objective of our local preschool programs is the prevention of future learning problems through parent education. With this aim in mind, a series of morning workshops and evening seminars for parents of preschoolers were planned for our community.

Parenthood is an unusual and special experience. It can be gratifying and at times frustrating. Through the publication of these seminars, we hope to share our information with you in order to help you enjoy and understand more fully your unique experience, parenthood.

We are grateful to the Contributors who so willingly volunteered their time and effort to share their expertise with our community. We appreciate the extra time and thought they expended in revising their original manuscripts. We wish to thank Rosemarie Cofrancesco, the former Chariman of the North Haven Right to Read Preschool Committee, who initiated the idea of having evening seminars for parents in North Haven. We acknowledge our gratitude to the present Co-Chairmen of the Preschool Committee for convincing us of the value of transcribing the seminars for publication. The transcription and editing of the taped seminars was an enormous endeavor on their parts. The contributions of all those who participated in this project made possible this sharing with a larger audience through the vehicle of the printed word what was orally presented to a smaller one.

CARMEL LUCIBELLO
Director North Haven Right to Read

KATHY BRANDT
Chairman North Haven Right to Read
Advisory Council

INTRODUCTION

The Art of Parenting

Roxanne Turekian and Gwendolyn Workman

If we accept the presupposition that early childhood experiences have a lasting effect on the young child's learning ability, then we are compelled to believe that the early years are crucial ones. This concept implies that parents and the quality of their parenting are key factors in the child's realization of his learning potential. The parent, then, is undeniably the child's first "teacher" and most probably will have the greatest impact on the child's development. All too often, parents are thrust into parenthood with little or no training and are usually unaware of the complexities and frustrations as well as the pleasures associated with "the art of parenting".

The nature of contemporary life in America, can leave parents unprepared to deal with the responsibilities of parenting. The demise of the classical extended family has destroyed the natural training ground for learning the necessary techniques. In modern society, the skilled and unskilled worker has more opportunities available to him for on the job training than do the primary caretakers of America's young - this is the legacy of the nuclear family. The nuclear family, separated geographically from grandparents and other relatives has rooted itself into American society and given rise to an isolated family unit and in turn, isolated parents. Parental anxiety and frustration can often be the natural by-products of such a social structure.

Is there a secret formula which can help parents deal totally with the inadequacies they may often feel in coping with the problems associated with the raising of their children? Unfortunately no such formula exists. There is simply no singular solution. There are many alternative approaches to child rearing and a potpourri of books and articles are available to parents on the subject. Strict adherence to any one method may prove to be confusing in practical application. All too often the advice offered to parents by "experts" is no more than opinion. Parents should not underestimate the value of their own beliefs and principles with respect to child rearing, for they themselves are the ones who know their children better than anyone else. Parents should choose those methods of child rearing which are compatible with their life style, temperaments and aspirations.

We are reminded over and over again that whatever the family structure or method of parenting may be, the individual parent cannot abandon his role. There are no substitutes to a healthy parent-child relationship, one which is built on positive mutual involvement. The amount of time we are willing to share with our children is important. There can be no doubt, however, that the quantity of time spent should be balanced with the quality of involvement. Positive relationships and experiences in the early years have been shown to be directly correlated with future school performance. The parent as the child's first teacher plays a

vital role in this area.

In the series of seminars contained in this volume, the major theme which pervades the individual topics is the fundamental role the parent plays in stimulating the child's total development: emotional, social and intellectual. We believe the suggestions presented in this collection of articles will help you feel more secure in your role as parents by reinforcing many of the parenting concepts you have already initiated as well as by providing some new insights intc "the art of parenting".

THE YOUNG CHILD'S VIEW OF HIMSELF: HIS BASIS FOR LEARNING

Jean Rustici

Although I have not had the privilege of having a preschooler, I have had the pleasure of spending time with them. In fact, recently, I had the good fortune to spend time with a little girl who was celebrating her third birthday. Immediately, I began to focus on the time people are born, the place and the circumstances. I wondered if there was such a thing as birth lag and what its relation to self-image could be. Suppose you enter the world at 11:30 P.M.; does that always make you a night person? Do you always have difficulty adjusting to the way other day oriented people live? I am very interested in the controversy that presently is raging concerning entry into the world, "birth". Some doctors are saying that we need to be cuddled and softly held at birth and not slapped on the fanny and made to cry.

What does all this have to do with the young child's view of himself? The young child's view of himself doesn't start with his entry into the world. It starts long before that. It starts with the parents' view of themselves. My impression of parents today is that they appear to be somewhat insecure in their role as parents. Recently, I noticed a course advertised by the Bank Street College of Education entitled,"Parenting, A Carnival of Advice". I thought that was such a good title because it is very descriptive of what happens to you as a parent in today's world. I think parents are deluged with a carnival of advice.

The first thing I want to get across in discussing the ways you build your own self-image as a parent is that you should be wary of all people like me who come down as great experts in child care. I think this for several reasons. "In the last fifty years," says Eda LeShan, "parent educators, so-called, have succeeded far better than they ever dared to expect, or dream in undermining parents' faith in themselves. Incidentally, when I talk about "expert" I'm talking about everybody you run into. Everybody is an expert in child care; from the obstetrician and maternity ward nurse, to the college guidance counselor, nursery school teacher, principal, pediatrician, social worker, therapist and even the anthropologist. The list is endless. What has happened in the last fifty years is that these experts by careful diligence have managed to destroy the curse of earlier times which was a self-assured secure parent who knew how to do it." I'm not saying that self-assurance need not be based on hard fact and knowledge, but I am saying that there is such a confusion of messages coming in that this kind of security on the part of parents has been destroyed. These same experts have endorsed the kind of perception that good parenting should produce instant success with children. It laid on parents, in plain English, the biggest guilt trip that has ever been put on anybody. If you do it <u>our</u> way, you can't fail. The basic flaw in this thinking is that it suggests that the parent-child relationship exists in a vacuum, or that what you do makes totally all the difference without any concern for what happens to your child in many other places. This kind of thinking is still around and it has come full circle. In a recent issue of News-

week, with a cover story on parents and children, it was reported that fifty thousand parents this year are paying fifty dollars a head to learn the "no lose" methods of Dr. Thomas Gordon's "Parent Effectiveness Training." Dr. Gordon himself says, "We teach specific parenting methods like a golf pro does." This thought is frightening to me. Life is not a match played out in a controlled environment. The same rules cannot apply. Parenting isn't one person winning because he has superior skill. What's significant here is that fifty thousand people felt the need for this kind of help. There certainly are some valuable things in Dr. Gordon's method. It is not the total answer to living with children.

Another man who is working in depth with parents is Dr. Lee Salk, who is at the New York Medical School. He takes the approach that parents' normal natural instincts in relating to their children have been so undermined by people in the helping professions that more of them are turning to experts for advice on bringing up children. Take a look at the courses offered. The how-to books are endless. They all play on the existing uncertainties of parents.

One of the most upsetting books I've read in recent months is entitled Liberal Parents, Radical Children by Midge Decter. This book says in effect, that parents have brought up their children with the idea that any pain or difficulty is a form of outrage and should not be tolerated. They had to be cured immediately, at first by mommy and daddy and later by society. The author emphasizes that this notion of immediate cure explains why the child who wakes up in the morning and feels bad decides to take a pill to feel good. Can we blame parents for this? Hasn't the youngster been inundated with messages from the time he's been high enough to turn on the knob for the tube that a pill would make all the difference? I don't think a trip like that can be put on parents. I am saying that the child's view of himself will depend very much on your view of yourself and I'm saying trust your instincts. Trust your gut reactions. Trust your feeling that you know more about this child right now than anyone else, and as such, that's a very heavy responsibility. You can take messages from here and techniques from there, and you may pick up something from this series that will actually be a help to you in dealing with your child, but don't take everything the experts tell you in absolute faith. If you trust your good sense, your feeling about yourself will be stronger. Your child will know it and his feeling about himself will be strengthened.

Let's take a closer look at the child's view of himself. Some time ago Leo Tolstoy wrote about the first five years of his life. "Was it not then that I acquired all that sustains me? Then I gained so much and so quickly that during the rest of my life I did not acquire a hundredth part of it. For myself as a five year old, to myself as I am now, there is only one step. The distance between myself as an infant and myself at five years is tremendous." That's what makes the preschool period such fun, so satisfying, so interesting, and so heavy for parents. Children do make tremendous strides. They come into the world and within two years they're mobile and walking around. They see the world as their oyster, and are even communicating quite a bit.

How does a child in this short span of time get a view of himself?

His self-image develops out of what he learns specifically from those people around him who love him. Self-image really pertains to the mental picture he has of himself. Raising children is basically a relationship between you and your child and there are no hard and fast rules for that. The kind of self-image that we want a child to have is one where he likes himself and believes he's a worthwhile person who can do things. Jimmy Hymes, a child development expert, writing way back in 1955 said, "What we really want to give our children is the Tarzan feeling." That sense of being able to conquer your environment. The sense that you are able to do things and nothing is impossible."

Another part of self-image is being able to set realistic goals for yourself and being able to meet them. That's the part where modern society is really working against the preschooler. It boils down to this discovery that he has an important role in his family because they care about how he thinks and what he says and does. Sometimes caring means a tremendous amount of attention when your're not always willing or able to give it at the preschool level. That's what makes life difficult for both the parent and child.

What happens when a child's image of himself is not sound, healthy and he doesn't have that positive Tarzan feeling about the world? The obvious things happen. If he thinks people don't like him, he usually ends up by being aggressive or withdrawn. It's critical for a child to have a feeling of self-confidence and a relationship with someone who cares about him. How does the Tarzan feeling develop? Children can show you in many ways that they want to be big. For instance, if you ask your child to help you carry something, he will always choose the biggest and heaviest bag. Children always have their eyes on the biggest and hardest job. Once they have mastered the impossible, the challenge no longer exists. It no longer serves the child's purpose although you may want the job done again. For example, you may have a three-year old who loves to wash dishes because washing dishes is "big." Your ten-year old will hate it. If you have bunk beds, the smallest child will always want to sleep in the highest bunk. If you have the occasion to be out after dark, you will notice that for your three-year old it is more exciting than going out during the day. The young child relishes the unusual. Whatever defies the usual is really what they're interested in.

The goal of the young child is to be in the driver's seat. They're pleased with anything they can steer and is noisy. Take a three-year old on a bicycle, he has power and loves that power. You've seen them get behind the wheel of your own car and pretend. They want to try out new situations and be appreciated for attempting the impossible. The real thrill for children and the way they develop a feeling of power is when they successfully conquer something themselves. The parents' role at this stage is to try to arrange situations so that the child can succeed. For example, at two it can be as simple as blowing out a match. By the time the child is six, hopefully, he should be functioning on a fairly independent level.

What makes the preschool period unusual, thrilling, and hard to

cope with is the child's ambivalence between dependence and independence. The parent should attempt to capitalize on the child's need to express his independence. Our contemporary life style makes this a difficult task for the parent. Modern society no longer looks to the child's individual contribution for family survival. In the past, the child was responsible for chores which frequently were critical for the family to function. Consequently, the child developed an early sense of responsibility and self-image. How can we attempt to develop independence in this ready made society so that the child can feel that he has left his mark as he grows and develops?

The responsibility for arranging the young child's environment so that the possibilities for experimentation exists rests with the parent. There are many ways of doing this. We can begin with something as simple as the kind of clothing we choose for them. Young children should be dressed in clothing that is not only comfortable but also manageable. Comfortable in that he is ready for action and manageable in that he can dress himself.

Parents should also be sensitive to the importance of the child's physical environment. It is important for the child to be able to manage as much of his daily routine as possible. We should consider the value of making available scaled down furniture and utensils. Try to make available child sized pitchers, spoons, and utensils. The opportunity to manage these items develops a sense of independence and control of the environment. In this way, the parent can help foster the child's need to experiment and provide an opportunity to make critical judgements. Piaget, a noted child developmentalist says, "What we really need to do is to create situations where structures can be discovered. It does not mean transmitting structures already made. Children have a real understanding only of that which they invent themselves and each time we try to teach them something too quickly what we do is keep them from inventing it themselves" and making it part of their built in knowledge.

If we believe in the importance of this period and that a major part of intelligence is developed before five, a hard look at the kinds of experiences a child can or cannot have makes a difference as to what kind of image he develops. Accordingly, it's important for him to be involved in play which involves risk taking. Such play is important in developing confidence and self-image. There aren't a lot of places where children can do things without being under constant supervision. Yet, we know that how a preschooler plays and what he's able to do will be one of the critical determinants as to how he works as an adult.

The preschooler is very much into visualizing himself as being as big as you are. This feeling is very important for him. You represent the possibilities of his own future. If you react to errors with severe criticism, (a playful experimenter kind of learner which all preschoolers are), will realize that it's more important for survival to be conventional than to be imaginative. The child will then learn to perform some things with precision and caution, but he will not be able to explore beyond the prescribed range of things.

A child's perception of adulthood is a critical factor in healthy image development. How much time do we give our children so that they can watch us as adults that are involved and happy working at something we enjoy? If children's exposure to the adult world is through the tube, they will undoubtedly view adults as people perpetually consumed with problems and concerns. If you see more of the unhappy crisis ridden adults of T.V. than your own parents, why would a child ever want to grow up? The involvement of children in watching their parents in action is important. A family has to plan not always for but with children to see them involved in their interests.

If you're reading to your child, talking to your child and giving him some idea about your involvement in life, he's going to become aware of the important ingredients required in developing a positive attitude. He's going to understand that communication and human relationships are essential. The foundation for positive communication starts with the early one to one relationships he has with a parent such as reading a story. In such situations, the child has room to say, "You're going too fast. I don't understand." That's something he can't do with a stranger, television or a learning machine. A learning experience involving a parent or older sibling will develop the importance of cooperation. Television,on the other hand, has none of these things. It requires nothing of him and it responds to nothing. It simply repeats in verse and song it's own lesson plan and if the child falls asleep or has a temper tantrum, it doesn't care. Another serious and important thing he gets by facing challenges with someone who's interested, is a sense of mutuality, a feeling that others can be trusted. He perceives you, the parent, as a teacher, who derives pleasure from his responses and efforts. He's an important person and that makes a tremendous difference in his ability to learn.

Another important part of the preschool child's learning environment is playmates. Most children go to a nursery school, play group, day care center or to a story hour because parents feel a need for involving their children with other children. This involvement of children with peers is very important. For example, Piaget says, "Cooperation is an essential factor in the intellectual development of a child." You can't learn in a vacuum. A preschooler can learn in a rudimentary way that his actions can be other enhancing which in turn can be self-enhancing.

Some people think the child needs friends in order to share. The issue of sharing toys and cooperating with peers becomes easier in a group situation like a nursery school or a day care center. Adults become disappointed and concerned when a child doesn't want to share his toys and possessions. We fail to take into account that when a child is playing at home, the toys are his. These toys are part of his self-image and a very important part. He's not about to give a piece of it up. It's easier in a group situation because nobody owns it all. There's a non-threatening, non-controversial, figure known as the teacher who says, "This belongs to all of us." The willingness to share in school, however, frequently does not carry over to home. We have to give him the room and time to work this problem out himself.

Why is the young child's view of himself his basis for learning? A child's performance in school is frequently related to how he was treated early in his life and as a result, how he perceives himself. Did he feel that those who loved him tuned him into their lives as well as their tuning into his? Such a pattern of growth and development makes for a very solid view of yourself.

Dr. Robert Coles, a psychologist, who has written many books about children and families makes a very interesting analogy between suburban life and that of the migrant farm worker. He says, "They have more things in common than we would expect. Suburban parents often lead an isolated nomadic existence. Fathers are moved around by corporations. Mothers and children can't always strike deep roots. Conversations with grandparents are confined to three minutes at the reduced Sunday night rates. People in wealthy suburban America," says Dr. Cole, "have been brought up to believe that there's something wrong with being dependent and to prove themselves have to be on the go all the time. There's a certain restlessness that works against activities with children. The facts show that more and more parents in the U.S. are spending less and less time actually involved with children."

Our society is making parental involvement harder and harder. Fortunately, there is a counter movement. A recognition of the problem is taking place which is a positive first step. Programs such as Right to Read which seeks the involvement of parents with their child are helping them become better equipped in the art of parenting. As these programs develop, hopefully, parents will experience the pleasure derived from nurturing children and excitement gained from learning with them.

Children will emerge from the preschool years with a Tarzan feeling about the future, a strong view of themselves and a firm basis for learning.

Three publications, in particular, have had a strong influence on shaping my thoughts and ideas on the young child's view of himself. One publication is entitled Child Development in the Home published by the government printing office. The other two are Conspiracy Against Childhood by Eda LeShan and A Childhood for Every Child by Marc Gerson. They are here for your inspection.

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INFANT PLAY

Kirsten Dahl

During the last decade, researchers have begun to examine play and its functional relationship to cognitive development and later school performance. Recent evidence suggests that the ability to play imaginatively is positively associated with the ability to wait, attend, postpone immediate gratification in favor of long term goals, and to organize cognitively (Singer, 1973). Almy (1967) argues that it is a necessary developmental step for the young child to take in reality egocentrically and affectively, as he does in imaginative play, before he can adapt to the system of logical thought that characterizes more mature thinking.

Play begins during the first year of life, as the infant plays both with his own and his mother's body. Piaget (1966) defines play as an activity where the motivation is not adaptation to reality, but a bending of reality to the demands of the self; he contrasts such activity to imitation in which the infant attempts to make his behavior conform to an external model. Piaget suggests that any behavior related to intelligence becomes play when it is repeated primarily for pleasure. Play is not a particular set of behaviors, but rather an orientation which may characterize any behavior.

Play appears to follow a developmental sequence, beginning in early infancy with reciprocal interchanges between mother and infant in which there is mutual regulation of stimulation through which an optimal level of affectively positive arousal is maintained (Stern, 1973). Murphy (1972) suggests that children who are unable to play imaginatively during their preschool years have not had the necessary earlier experience of an active, mutual exchange of play signals with the mother during infancy. One can imagine here a mother with her four month old infant and their exchanges of mutual gazing, smiling and vocalizing.

Several developmental sequences of play have been proposed. Anna Freud (1965) suggests that play begins when the infant plays with his own body; he moves from play with his own body, to play with his mother's body. Gradually, the infant transfers his play with his mother to play with soft objects, which seem to represent some aspects of the mother; Anna Freud calls such soft, expecially valued toys "transitional objects." The transitional objects are then replaced by more diverse toys and the ability to play imaginatively. Murphy (1972) hypothesizes that play begins with the emergence of the peek-a-boo game during early infancy, proceeding through the infant-throw and mother-retrieve game in the latter half of the first year, developing into imitation by the toddler of the mother as caregiver in domestic mimicry and finally becoming the symbolic play of the three year old. Peller (1954) sets forth three early developmental phases of play behavior, beginning in infancy in which play consists of extensions and variations of body functions and parts. Phase II begins with games of losing and finding, peek-a-boo and imitation of the mother through feeding and doll play. Peller imagines the fantasy behind such play to be "I can do to others what Mommy did to

or for me." Phase III is initiated with simple imaginative play in which the child attempts to share a fantasy, through play, with another. These three developmental sequences all emphasize the beginning of play in the context of the infant's relationship with his parents, especially his mother.

Parents can support the development of play, and thereby early cognitive development, through the mutuality and reciprocity of their relationship with their infant. Play begins in the context of an emotionally significant relationship with a mothering person, not through a planned curriculum or the presentation of specific materials. Toys can be used to enhance play, but they cannot take the place of the attachment relationship in the development of play.

Before turning to descriptions of simple games which can be played with infants of different ages, let us review some basic guidelines which can be used to support and enhance the infant's developing ability to play.

1) Play between baby and caregiver should be interactive and reciprocal; that is, the actions of one should influence the actions of the other.
2) The adult caregiver must be sensitive to the baby's cues, adapting her or his play behavior accordingly, rather than rigidly adhering to a preplanned curriculum. The activity should be pursued only if the baby seems to be enjoying it; when the infant begins to show signs of tiring, the play should be discontinued. Parents need to be responsive to their baby's variations of mood, providing for alternation between active and quiet times.
3) Interactions between caregiver and child should involve many different ways of communicating - looking, touching, holding, talking and imitating.
4) Babies can attend more easily to simple and clear language.
5) Infants enjoy practicing already acquired skills while playing with their caregivers, as well as learning new ones; playtime can provide for an alternation between both. New skills can be introduced through the imitation and expansion by the caregiver of the play variations initiated by the baby.
6) In presenting a new toy, the baby should be given time to discover and explore it as he wishes; the caregiver is the facilitator, not the director, of the baby's play.
7) Babies have different play styles; there is no "right way" to play. In the beginning, parents need to adapt their play behavior to the infant's style, picking up on the baby's cues to the ways of interacting, communicating, and playing which are most interesting and pleasurable for the baby.
8) Toys should be chosen which stimulate the baby's senses; some toys are interesting to look at, some to touch, some to listen to. Most importantly, toys should encourage action and manipulation, not simply entertain. In addition to encouraging manipulation, infant toys should be "responsive" to the baby's actions, so that he can perceive the changes his activity with the toys

brings about.

Bearing these guidelines in mind, then, let us review some basic games and their variations appropriate for infants of different ages.

Games to Play with the Under Six Months Baby

By three months, most babies have achieved stable patterns of sleeping and waking, and are able to sustain longer periods of alert wakefulness. The baby has a definite social smile, adjusts his body when picked up, can follow a person with his eyes, and will respond vocally when spoken to. He enjoys interacting socially with familiar people, especially his primary caregivers, and responds to their attention with smiling, cooing, and increased body activity. He is beginning to anticipate activities with his caregiver such as feeding and is able to wait for a few moments to be attended to, because he can now remember past experiences. The baby is beginning to be able to reach for and grasp an object, which he will often put to his mouth.

During these early months, play with the infant usually takes place around the daily routines of caring for the infant, such as feeding, bathing, dressing. The baby is most able to attend to and play with his parents during periods of comfortably alert wakefulness, when he is interested in the world, and especially the people, around him.

The goal of play with the under six month infant is to let the baby know that his actions are having an effect and to help him develop the expectation that his activity can influence events. Reciprocal interaction between caregiver and baby, where the caregiver's actions are responsive to the baby's, forms the basis for the earliest games. Engaging the baby's attention in interaction, smiling back at the baby as he gazes at his caregiver's face, vocalizing in response to the baby's cooing and the myriad variations on these themes are the first games the baby can play with the emotionally significant adults in his life. Helping the infant to attend to, and visually follow an interesting object, such as a rattle, is another game. The baby can be helped to reach for and grasp the interesting object by moving the toy towards his stomach until he reaches for and grabs it; the mothering person can emphasize the effect of the baby's actions by exclaiming, "You got it!" As the baby grows, this simple game can become more challenging by making the baby work a little harder to see or grab the toy. Throughout these simple games, language development can be supported by talking to the baby in simple, clear language. Not only does responding to the baby's vocalizations with language or imitations of his sounds enhance language development, but talking to the baby (even though he cannot understand the words) about what the caregiver is doing, what the baby is doing, or what the baby sees, all help to promote his interest in speech sound-making.

Games to Play with the Six to Twelve Month Old Infant

During the second half of the first year, the baby is becoming more active, and he has some control over his own actions. He can sit up, creep and crawl. He actively initiates social contact by smiling, vocal-

izing, or reaching out his hands. He appears curious about his caregivers, touching and poking at their faces, eyes, nose and mouth, playfully. He is interested in exploring objects with his hands and mouth, too, examining toys by careful visual inspection and poking his fingers into them; he is able to discriminate small distinctions visually. He is beginning to remember objects long enough that he can find them when they are covered and he may have strong preferences for one toy over another.

The goal of games during this second six months is to help the baby develop the notion that events and people are dependable and predictable. His developing abilities to anticipate the results of his own actions and to know that an object or person continues to exist, even when out of sight, can be supported through play.

The following basic games for caregiver and baby implement these goals:

1) The Mirror Game: Using either a large mirror or a hand mirror, the caregiver engages the baby's interest in his own reflection. The caregiver says, "Where's the baby?" Encourage the baby to point to and tap his mirror image, repeating, "That's right! There's the baby!" Gradually the baby will begin to recognize himself in the mirror. Once he is able to recognize his mirror image, this game can be varied by having him search for his image, when the mirror is moved slightly. When the baby is able to recognize himself in the mirror, it is also possible to expand this game by asking, "Where's the baby's nose?" or other parts of the body.
2) Hide and Seek: Attract the baby's attention with a favorite toy and then, as he watches, quickly hide it under a blanket, saying, "Where'd it go? You find it!" Encourage the baby to pull off the blanket as you exclaim, "There it is! You found it!" As the baby becomes able to easily find the toy, this game can be made slightly more difficult, by hiding the toy behind a pillow and encouraging the baby to pull away the pillow.
3) Peekaboo: This game begins with the caregiver facing the baby, covering her own eyes and saying, "Where's the baby? I can't see you," and then uncovering her eyes and exclaiming, "There you are. I see you!" with pleasure. Gradually the baby can learn to imitate the peekaboo gestures as the caregiver says the words.
4) Get the Toy: The caregiver, holding the baby in a sitting position, puts a favorite toy on a blanket just slightly out of arms reach for the baby. The baby is encouraged to get the toy by pulling the blanket towards him; the caregiver can enhance the baby's actions by saying, "You get it. You get the toy," and exclaiming, "You got it!" when the baby is successful.
5) Body Parts: By the end of the first year, the infant can "find", when asked, parts of his body which he can see. However, this game can begin with the caregiver doing both the "asking" and "answering." The caregiver says to the baby, "Where are your toes?" and then, playfully grasping the baby's

toes, exclaims, "There are your toes!" The caregiver can help the baby begin to identify the parts of his body he cannot see in a similar fashion. As the infant explores his caregiver's face with his fingers, she can say to him, "That's right, that's my nose. Where's your nose?" and then lightly touch the baby's nose, adding, "There's your nose!" Another variation on the body parts game is "This Little Piggie Went to Market." With this game, the baby will learn to anticipate the conclusion of the game with great pleasure.

6) Nursery Rhymes: Many very simple nursery rhymes can be introduced to the baby during the second half of his first year. The infant should sit on the caregiver's lap, facing the caregiver, who recites the rhymes in a clear rhythmic voice. "Row, row, row your boat," "Patacake," and "So-Big" are all good rhymes for this age baby, and ones in which the baby can learn the rhythmic activity associated with the rhyme.

All six of these simple games have many variations, invented anew by each caregiver and infant. Babies enjoy repeating games they know well and anticipating the conclusion, but new twists to familiar games can be fun too.

Games to Play with the Twelve to Eighteen Month Old Infant

During the first half of the second year, the baby's major accomplishment is learning to walk. An enormous amount of his time and energy is spent in practicing this newly developing skill. Along with his new found ability to get around independently from his parents comes a heightened awareness of his attachment to them. The young toddler is more aware of himself as a separate body and person. He is beginning to be able to distinguish the different members of his family by name and he is learning specific names for some of the important objects in his life. He begins to show some wish to please the significant adults in his life, at the same time displaying pride in his new found autonomy and burgeoning self-control.

As one would expect, the young toddler's play becomes more complex with these developmental achievements. His increasing motor skills enable him to roll or toss a ball, push and pull a toy, pile up and knock down blocks, play with water, fill and empty pots and other containers. His blossoming interest in independence and autonomy contribute to his ability to play happily on his own for brief periods of time. Nevertheless, play with the significant adults in his life continues to be an important avenue for supporting and enhancing the young toddler's cognitive and emotional development. Play between baby and caregiver can have many functions, but two seem basic: to help the baby increase his motoric skillfulness, both fine and large muscle coordination, and to help him feel comfortable with his developing awareness of himself as a separate, autonomous person. Both of these contribute to the young toddler's belief that he is an effective person who can control his actions and master his experience.

The young toddler's pleasure and interest in practicing walking can be utilized in the game of "Go and Get It." In this game, the caregiver

asks the baby to go and get some favorite toy or familiar object from another room. The caregiver can say, "Where's your teddy? You go get it!" When the baby returns with the correct object, he should be praised, "Yes, that's your teddy. You found it!" There are, of course, many variations on this basic game, including asking the young toddler to give the found object to someone else: "Give the teddy to Daddy." Directions should be kept clear and simple; the game should not be made more challenging until the young toddler appears quite competent at the basic "Go and Get It."

The young toddler's interest in experimenting with moving independently from room to room can also be utilized in Hide and Seek. The simplest version of this game begins when the baby is in another room; the caregiver calls, "Where's Susie?" and then goes to find her, exclaiming, "There you are!" The baby can be encouraged in similar fashion to search for and find her caregiver. A variation of this can be played when caregiver and baby are in the same room. The caregiver hides, in the beginning being partially visible, and encourages the baby to search for her. Roles can then be reversed, with the baby hiding and being found. The young toddler is likely to "hide" by covering her eyes, or squatting rather obviously behind a chair. As the basic versions of Hide and Seek are mastered, the game can be made more challenging by expanding the number of places that must be searched before the caregiver or the toddler can be found. For the young toddler, Hide and Seek can be a highly pleasureable way of mastering some of the anxiety generated by his new independence; such a game helps him to learn that separations from the emotionally significant people in his life are bearable.

Small muscle coordination can be supported through the games of "Fill It Up and Dump," using both large and small opening containers and different sized objects to put into the containers. In addition, games in which objects are put into a container and dumped out contribute to the development of a concept of cause and effect. Stacking large blocks in a tower and knocking them over is a variation on this theme. Play with a "color cone" in which colored rings are stacked on a wooden dowel also helps to develop small muscle skills and eye-hand coordination. Containers with lids to take off or to be opened support development of these skills as well; putting something into the container and encouraging the baby to get it out adds to the interest of this game.

Water play can be introduced to the young toddler; either the sink or a dish pan can be used, along with a small number, perhaps two or three, of different sized, unbreakable containers and a plastic measuring cup for pouring. Though water play is fascinating for older children as well, who can do quite complicated things, the underlying interest, for any age child, lies in his being able to manipulate, to mess, and to clearly see the effect of his actions on the material. Though the young toddler can engage in water play alone, the adult facilitates his baby's learning by playing with him, imitating and enlarging the baby's repertoire of pouring and dumping skills, and commenting verbally on what the baby is doing. For example, "Pour it into the big cup. See, now it's full of water. Dump it out. See, now it's empty. Can you fill it up again?"

In addition to "conversation" around the baby's activities and games, the young toddler's language development can be enhanced through the use of picture books. The caregiver holds the baby on her lap so that they can both look at the book. The baby can be shown how to turn the pages and allowed to do so at his own pace. His attention can be drawn to the clearly recognizable pictures. The caregiver can read a "story" by simply pointing to and naming the familiar objects in the book, "There's the dog. Pat the doggie. Oh, here's a kitty. How does a kitty go? Mew, mew. What's this? That's right! It's a baby!" Children of this age will also enjoy simple nursery rhymes with their accompanying actions such as "Ring Around the Roses," and "London Bridge." These action games help the young toddler develop the notion of the predictability of a sequence, that one thing follows another.

Play Activities for the Eighteen to Twenty-Four Month Old Toddler

By this age, the child has made enormous maturational strides. He can both walk and run, climb, throw a ball, and grasp with precision tiny objects. He has rudimentary expressive language and so is able to name significant people and things in his environment. He can make requests, protests and statements indicating his awareness of self, others, and the environment, as well as relationships between the three. He has begun to have some control over his impulses and can defer a little the immediate gratification of his own wishes in favor of parental approval. His awareness of his parents is sharp and his attachment to them, especially his mother, is strong. At the same time, he has become increasingly aware of his separateness from others and his capacity for independent action and feeling. Though upset when separated from his mother for any appreciable length of time, he has also developed some measures for comforting himself. Further, he has learned the consistency and constancy of inanimate objects, and along with this, has begun to develop symbolic thinking. Finally, he has a rudimentary understanding of space, time, sequence, and simple cause and effect relationships.

Toddler play reflects these maturational gains. If we return to the various developmental lines described earlier, we can see that the significant shifts between infancy and toddlerhood occur in his relations with others, most especially his primary caregiver, and increased differentiation between play and skill practice.

He has moved from play with his own and his mother's body to play with his mother a play partner; he is also able to sustain play independent from his mother. He has been able to make this developmental progression because of his relationship with his primary caregiver, who has supported and developed his play with his own and her body during infancy. His ability to play with someone as a partner is also related to his differentiation of self from mother, his awareness of the separateness and distinctness of his body from hers.

Along with this developmental shift, the toddler experiences pride in his ability to control his own body and actions, as well as a dawning awareness that he cannot always control the actions of others.

His play reflects both these changes and helps him to master the

anxiety generated by his developing autonomy. As with the young toddler, children of this age continue to enjoy games of Hide and Seek, both with people and with objects. However, the toddler is able to engage in much more complicated versions of these games, finding objects he has not seen hidden. In addition to the Hide and Seek games, the child's beginning solitary play is a way of "dosing" himself with separation from his mother. Playing apart from his mother, perhaps in his own room, the toddler can experience managing without his mother through the satisfaction of his own activity.

Not only does the toddler attempt to master through play the anxiety generated by his sense of separateness from his mother, but his play also expresses his pride in autonomy, the feeling that he is in control. Building towers with blocks and knocking them down, only to rebuild, is one such game. Rolling a ball back and forth between toddler and caregiver is another game in which the child experiences his ability to control himself and his actions.

As the toddler enters the world of symbols, becoming capable of symbolic thinking, a wider range of play activities becomes possible. The toddler is now able to detach concepts from their concrete roots; he can pretend to sip milk from an empty cup, play being Daddy or going "Bye bye" by putting on a man's hat, or push a block and imagine it is a car. The appearance of imaginative play is the most significant development in the toddler's play activity. This new kind of play is initiated and supported by the caregiver engaging the toddler in simple make-believe play such as feeding the dolly, pretending to cook or eat, or putting the dolly to bed. The toddler begins to imitate in his play with his dolls the experiences he has had earlier with his caregiver. Though he is content often to engage in such simple domestic mimicry on his own, the development of symbolic play can be enhanced by the active participation of the caregiver, who can help the toddler to elaborate and vary the simple domestic themes. At first, pretending to take a trip may be played by the toddler simply waving bye-bye and walking around. The caregiver can expand such play, one step at a time, by offering a hat, suggesting keys to "lock the door," pulling up a chair or large block to "be the car" and pointing out "sights to see from the car window." In a similar fashion, simple cooking play can be broadened by suggesting things to cook, inviting the dollies to eat, feeding the dollies, washing the dishes, putting the dollies to bed, going grocery shopping and so on.

Language development is also enhanced by the blossoming of symbolic play. In addition, language can be supported through simple conversations with the toddler about the world, and people, around him. The toddler also enjoys being told, or read, simple stories; he may develop strong preferences for some books over others and will then enjoy hearing these over and over. With very familiar stories, he can be encouraged to supply the answer to "And then what happened?"

By the age of two, the child is beginning to be interested in other children as play partners. His beginning skills in negotiating the social world beyond his family have been developed through his reciprocal, and playful, relationship with his primary caregiver. Though his parents

will continue to be his most important teachers for many years to come, he is now ready, and able, to learn from less emotionally significant people.

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

Carolyn E. Williams

This discussion will include the following points: the development of self concept of a child as primarily influenced by a parent's relationship to children in general or to his own children; and how self concept relates to children's receptivity to learning and to the teaching or modeling provided by a parent.

Let's begin with a Memorandum from Your Child:

1) Don't spoil me. I know quite well that I ought not to have all that I want and ask for. I'm only testing you.
2) Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it. It lets me know where I stand.
3) Don't use force with me. It teaches me that power is all that counts. I will respond more readily to being led.
4) Don't be inconsistent. That confuses me and makes me try harder to get away with everything that I can.
5) Don't make promises - promises you may not be able to keep. That will discourage my trust in you.
6) Don't fall for my provocations when I say and do things just to upset you.
7) Don't be too upset when I say I hate you. I don't mean it, but I want you to feel sorry for what you've done to me.
8) Don't make me feel smaller than I am. I will make up for it by behaving like a big shot.
9) Don't do things for me that I could do myself. It makes me feel like a baby and I may continue to put you in my service.
10) Don't let my bad habits get me a lot of your attention. It only encourages me to continue them.
11) Don't correct me in front of people. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.
12) Don't try to discuss my behavior in the heat of a conflict. For some reason, my hearing is not very good at this time and my cooperation is even worse. It's all right to take the action required but let's talk about it later.
13) Don't try to preach to me. You'd be surprised how well I know what's right and wrong.
14) Don't make me feel that my mistakes are sins. I have to learn to make mistakes without feeling that I'm no good.
15) Don't nag. If you do, I shall have to protect myself by appearing deaf.
16) Don't demand explanations for my wrong behavior. I really don't know why I did it.
17) Don't tax my honesty too much. I'm easily frightened into telling lies.
18) Don't forget that I love and use experimenting. I learn from it so please put up with it.
19) Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn from experience.
20) Don't take too much notice of my small ailments. I may learn

to enjoy poor health if it gets me much attention.

(Source unknown)

The preceding memorandum certainly gives us as parents a great deal to consider in how we become involved in the child's learning process. It's becoming increasingly essential for us to establish a continuity between the preschool years and the entrance into formal schooling. The learning experiences that parents and children share together in their own homes can be translated into what they will be doing in school in the future. It's becoming more acceptable for parents to speak out and suggest what they would like to see in their schools. Their involvement is becoming a basic part of the educational process. Parents must speak out! Their ideas are extremely important because it is with the parent that the child spends most of his time. The parent is the unique individual who knows that child better than anyone else.

There's a recognition that children are born with different dispositional bents. Some,perhaps, could be likened to soft clay and others to wood or steel. The child likened to soft clay bends amicably to parental expectations. The child likened to wood is shaped frequently at the expense of splinters. The child resembling steel stubbornly resists guidance. Children, undoubtedly, are different combinations of these materials and whatever the combinations, the responsibility for shaping the potential and life style of the child is paramount for the parent.

In the process of building healthy self concepts in children, parents and teachers play a vital role in the total learning experience. We have the responsibility for keeping in touch with the human condition. We must help the child achieve human excellence along with academic excellence. Too often, we hear about the stress placed on academics in schools. This is where parents have the right and the privilege to say, "Let's back up and look at what is happening affectively to children and not just cognitively."

What is self concept? You have it. Your children have it. Everyone has it. It's seeing one's self. It's the way a child sees himself and how he consistently behaves with that self image. What is a healthy self concept? A child speaks with confidence, "I'm nice." "I can do it." "I like myself." "I like me. Do you?" He may not always verbalize it. Sometimes we can see it from his actions. You can see it in his eyes and face and can see that he has a feeling that everything is all right in the world and particularly his world. There's a pride in self accomplishment. He's free to show that he's happy after achieving something. He seeks out adults to look at his acievements, and hopefully, the processes in which he's involved.

Unfortunately, there are children who tear up what they have produced. Such action may indicate something is wrong. As adults involved with children, we should try to be sensitive to behavior which may indicate the development of a negative self image. A child may lack confidence, feel what he has done is unacceptable, and as a result, become easily discouraged. A child may hide or destroy what he has done. He may refuse to attempt activities in which other children are involved.

He may refuse to play with children in the neighborhood. He may be getting a message that makes him feel less acceptable than the child with a more healthy self concept. He may show fear of particular people or attitudes. For example, a child may send himself a birthday card, because he feels no one else would send him one. These examples could be interpreted as expressions of a negative self image and would indicate reason for concern.

Where does self concept come from and how does it grow? Perhaps, the most important relationship a child can have is the one he has with his parents. Teachers have a strong influence as well. A child's positive feeling about himself will grow as he meets people outside his home. As the child gets out into his world of the small neighborhood, and later into the school, the lines of communication will constantly be expanding and have an influence on his development. You, the parent, however, are the initial link. Parents should take a close look at themselves to determine how they view children in general. What is your basic attitude about what your child is or what any child is? Parents can view children as show pieces, as extensions of themselves, as the bearers of family tradition, as nuisances or as loveable people. The parent must not only evaluate his attitude toward his own child, but should also consider his attitude toward himself. The parent who sees himself as having value will see his child as having value. The child will feel this in turn. If a parent values himself, he will be respected by his child as well. The parent-child relationship develops in this kind of reciprocal pattern.

As the child grows, attitudes change and parents react to the growth and change in their children. The child is affected by both the usual consistent and also the changing feelings parents and teachers have toward him. Unknowingly, parents may not only use their children, but may also treat them as one would treat possessions. Children may be used to work out their parents' problems or to fulfill their personal needs. If a child is treated as a possession who can be controlled, parents will have difficulty in letting go and will neglect to give him an opportunity to take risks which are essential in order for learning to occur. They must allow the child freedom which will enable him to try new things. This freedom does not mean a lack of control allowing him to get into situations which are physically or emotionally dangerous. What it does mean is giving the child the right to make decisions within his realm and being sensitive to opportunities which arise that will allow him to make some decisions. You're not controlling. You're guiding. The key is guidance not manipulation. It implies that the child will have the necessary support systems that will give him the courage to reach out, to experiment, to solve problems and to make judgments.

Children can be used for social prestige. The child may be pushed to achieve at an early age or is encouraged to gain entry into a particular school or profession. Parents' values and standards help form this concept. Doing or achieving is a healthy expectation to a point if a child is not pushed for selfish purposes. Parents' expectations must be in balance with the child's individual needs and interests. Parents must try to understand and know their children as individuals and with this

information guide their children toward the fulfillment of their potential.

Children learn values by observing their parents' and teachers'. Does the parent view the child as a good or bad person or as a person he loves? Parents need to help a child understand and separate the concepts of goodness and badness from the concept of loving. The child is loved at any given moment despite our anger with him at times. Love is on-going. Anger is temporary. The child can become easily confused by love. He may believe his parents love him only when he's good. The ability to define love is part of the learning process. In helping the child understand love, parents should make a clear distinction between their feelings about the child as a person and their feelings about his behavior in a special situation. Perhaps, what they need to say to the child is, "At times we don't like what you do, but we still love you." We need to be careful about emphasizing achievement. It's dangerous to evaluate children only in terms of achievement, but rather to see them in terms of who they are as persons. From the standpoint of doing or achieving, children often learn to earn love. We have to be careful how we honor that kind of doing. As parents, we should be careful not to always reward and award everything a child does. What he does in the family setting usually centers around the process of growing and of learning to accept responsibility and of fitting into the family context. The kind of doing the child is involved with in the family situation is similar in process to what he will be involved with in school.

Caught up in the enthusiasm of helping our children up the ladder of success, one of the things some parents and teachers forget to do is to allow children to daydream. We are particularly guilty of this in school. Teachers and parents find it difficult to allow children to just look at the ceiling or rock back and forth. We feel guilty and think the child should be doing something more constructive. Daydreaming should be permitted, as it,too, is part of learning. A child must be allowed to dream and to think about ideas that are important to him. A certain amount of daydreaming is healthy. It is an important tool in developing imagination and creative thinking.

A solid parent-child relationship depends on communication. A parent should be able to communicate what he feels and in turn should be receptive and sensitive to messages from the child. Early in life the child attaches meaning to his parents' voice intonations and facial expressions. In this way,he picks up cues as to how his parents feel about him even without the use of words. Later, as the child learns to communicate verbally, there will be an increase in verbal exchanges. It is important for parents to refine verbal communication between themselves and their children. Too often, adults talk to children without listening to what the child is saying in return. As a result, communication is short circuited and the child's receptors are turned off.

Communication of emotions is an important dimension of the communication process. Helping a child realize his parents and teachers are human is critical. We must help him understand that we have emotions just as he does. Perhaps we have better control of them, but we still

have them. Children should be aware that both fathers and mothers cry and not just that women cry and men don't. Since stereotyping is learned early, it is our responsibility to show children that men and women have similar emotions and are capable of showing them. Explanations should accompany the expression of these adult emotions so that children do not become frightened. Through these kinds of experiences, hopefully, each child will grow in the understanding of his inner self, and develop the ability to deal with his concerns and fears in a positive way.

Parents may not view the child similarly or consistently. A child actually has two pictures of himself. He has two parents and both of them may see him differently. As he grows away from the family circle, he sees himself in many more ways that lend to a total feeling about who he is. He learns more about himself initially through the eyes of his parents. However, in those things which are important in terms of the child's development, it's critical to be consistent. For example, in one instance the child may be considered too young to stay up late. Yet, if he should express fear about going to the dentist, he may be told he's a big boy and can handle it. In one situation he's considered very young, and in another he's a big boy. It's a simple difference for the adult. However, to the child, it becomes a confusion of messages and may be incomprehensible. These inconsistencies can cause more confusion if the child becomes aware of differences in attitude each parent may have. If differences in values and expectations are perceived, the child may learn to play one parent against the other. His role can become that of the manipulator who controls family situations by pitting one parent against the other.

There are many factors which influence self concept. Those factors which deal with the objective view of the child include the physical, unchangeable givens he inherits from his biological parents. Along with the biological characeristics are situational or environmental factors. For example, was he born early or late in his parent's lives? Was he a twin? Was he a first, middle or last child? Was he planned? Did he arrive when the family resources were good or bad? Where did the family live? Were the parents educated? What was the socio-economic level of the family? Was the family strongly ethnic or religious in their beliefs? All these factors help develop the child's self concept as well as have an impact on the parents' view of themselves.

Parents and teachers make mistakes as well as children. Mistakes can be used in a positive way as an opportunity for change and growth. If we understand the child and how he comes to know himself, we will be able to see his strengths and weaknesses in the light of our own. Parents should realize that the search to find out who they are goes on throughout their lives, and it is their responsibility to encourage their children to grow in the directions that they as children feel are positive.

As we work and play with our children, learning to learn is a far more basic type of learning than coaching the child to be prepared for kindergarten or for first grade. This principle of learning has important implications for teachers as well. Teachers should be cautious

about trying to teach children facts in order to be ready for the next grade. What they should focus on is the quality of life that the child is experiencing during that given year. The emphasis should be on what is happening to that child right then. Positive experiences will increase the probability of his successfully dealing with the next year.

We must try to convey that learning for learning's sake is an exciting venture, and that we're all in it together. The excitement that can be found in learning will motivate the child to find pleasure in the exploration of thoughts and ideas. It involves developing the child's curiosity and ability to attend to others and to engage in purposeful action. It includes helping the child delay what might be instant gratification and learning that there's a process he must often go through, before there is that gratification. Rewards or goals are not always the primary objective.

An important dimension of learning is the development of the child's ability to identify adults as sources of information and ideas. It also includes the recognition that adults in their interaction with children can also learn from children. It should be possible for parents to use their own ideas in such a way that communication does not become only single directional, parent to child. With early experiences of this nature, when the child enters school, he will be able to identify the teacher as someone who will listen to his ideas. He becomes aware that learning is a reciprocal process which involves people who have mutual respect for one another's thoughts and ideas.

As parents, we live in a changing world. We need to understand children as they see the world, and help them to live in it. The child's world differs from our own, and we must help build bridges between the past and the present, keeping what is good and moving on to new ideas for the future. Children should be allowed to take part in the development of new values. This brings to mind a critical question for parents. How far should they go in implanting their values and how far should they go in allowing children to set their own value systems? The two and three year old is not concerned with this problem because his values are usually the same as his parents, but as a child grows, he becomes more involved in this process.

Children, as well as parents, value achievement, enjoy learning, and delight in the mastery of skills. It's how we get at them that's important. Demanding too much too early, and pushing too hard towards standards which are too high for the child can often break down a youngster's will to try and fill the child with an anxious sense of dependency. A watering down of standards or profuse praise for faulty performance may be equally damaging. We must be sensitive to the child's needs and interests and attempt to provide a supportive environment, one in which the needs of the whole child are considered so that he may realize his emotional, intellectual, social and physical potential.

In closing, I'd like to share some suggestions which may be helpful as you live through experiences with your child at home. Most important - Read, Read, Read! Make this part of your child's daily experience. Talk,

Talk, Talk! A good rapport is developed in talking together. Help your child develop a sensitivity and curiosity about the physical world. For example, help develop an awareness of the cycles of nature such as the changing seasons, growing and living things, and the shapes, colors and forms of the world about him. But more importantly, help him develop a keen sensitivity to people and help nurture in him a feeling of confidence and a sense of caring that can be identified as he glowingly says, "It's great to be me!"

THE PARENTS' ROLE IN THE PRESCHOOLER'S LEARNING ABILITY: DANGER SIGNALS

John Schowalter M.D.

Human development follows three main paths: the biologic, the psychologic and the social. The biologic includes the basic physical and mental potentialities the infant is born with. The psychologic is to a large extent determined by the child's experiences with important figures during his or her early years, and concerns the thoughts and drives from within the body. Biologic development begins at the moment of conception and has come a long way by the time of birth. Psychologic development, strictly speaking, does not begin until the child can definitely distinguish himself from the outside world at some time usually beyond age three months. Social development begins later, when the toddler begins to learn how to live with other people. So, the pyramid of the individual rises in biologic, psychologic and social layers. By the same token, with crisis, this pyramid is torn down from the top. When in danger we are usually concerned least with social protocal or with peace of mind, and most with avoidance of bodily harm.

Erik Erikson has noted that it is human to have a long childhood but it is civilized to have an even longer one. There is no creature on earth who is more helpless than the newborn infant. In every way, he or she is dependent completely on the parents, especially the mother. This fact that the child's comfort, discomfort, and life itself all stems from the infant's relationship with the parents is the reason our parents and what they have or have not done, influence us until the day we die. Most of us are inclined to bring up our children in relation to how we were brought up, and the easiest way to be a successful parent is to have had successful parents with whom to identify. Without this advantage, child rearing becomes a conscious problem of mixing the correct amounts of affection, stimulation, consistency and discipline. As when the baker asks how long to bake a cake and is told to have it done but not burned, the novice parent may feel equally confused with the readily available but often contradictory advice offered. In regard to weaning and toilet training as well as other child rearing practices, and I include formal education here as well, I believe that the emotional climate of the parent-child or teacher-pupil relationship is probably much more significant for success than are the exact techniques employed. Working with people is not so much what you do but how you do it. Loved and respected parents and teachers can make any technique look good, but the most efficient technique always becomes a failure if not used well. This is why there is no definitive book on teaching or child rearing. The very fact that so many new "breakthrough" books are published each year reminds us that there is no one way.

Play is one of the earliest and most successful ways a child has for coping with internal and external stress. It is also the young child's major avenue for learning. Play can be a child's work and also his way of thinking. It too, can be an important step toward socialization, since even when a child is playing alone it is usually as though with

others.. Six common benefits a child attains from play are:

1) It allows him to do things he would be punished for if he did them for real.
2) It allows him to have secrets from adults.
3) It allows him to treat things in the same manner as he would like to be treated.
4) It allows respite from reality.
5) It allows the repetition of frightening situations until they become familiar, for security lies in the perpetuation of the familiar.
6) It allows being active in situations in which, as a child, he or she must usually be passive.

Parents should obviously encourage play by both playing with their children and also by allowing them to play either alone or with peers. When toys are bought, a better stimulus to learning is to buy toys which the child can and must structure rather than those which structure the child.

Play is no longer play when the child cannot stop or control it. If play becomes so stereotypic and/or exciting that the child must not leave it but continue in a compulsive, ritualistic way to the exclusion of other activities or friends, it is no longer play and is no longer a vehicle for learning. This is a danger signal, and advice should be sought from a pediatrician or child psychiatrist.

Some aspects of development are more problematic than others. The following discussion will concentrate more specifically on four areas of concern. These are sexual interests, aggression in childhood, discipline, and hyperactivity.

As one can tell from seeing movies, noticing advertisements, and browsing around newsstands, sex is a topic which interests people. This interest begins early. Probably because boys tend to die more easily than girls, more boys than girls are born. For example, congenital anomalies, cerebral palsey and intrauterine deaths are all more common for males. Boys have a 32% higher mortality rate than girls in the first week of life. On the other end of the spectrum, husbands on the average die five years earlier than their wives.

Prior to puberty, boys and girls have no significant differences in sex hormone production. Playing with their genitals is reported for their children by over a third of mothers during the child's first year of life. Parents expect and treat their infants in a way to reinforce sexual identification. By eighteen months, children begin to distinguish whether they are boys or girls and by age three, sexual identity is usually fixed and unchangeable. Around this time sexual interest becomes more obvious, and curiosity with anatomical differences will be seen. Questions about reproduction will arise especially if the mother is pregnant. Many children imagine the whole process takes place along the digestive track. Questions are usually best answered through clarification and with a simplified version of the facts. These answers may then be elaborated on as the child grows older. It is important in

answering questions about sex to find out specifically what the child is interested in. If you don't know this, then you may answer more along the lines of what you think the child is interested in or what you are interested in.

Danger signs in the area of sex include on the one hand, the child who asks no questions or shows no sexual interest and on the other, the child who is continuously preoccupied with sex. With the former, the child may be afraid to ask questions,and this hesitancy may generalize to learning altogether. For example at the Yale Child Study Center Clinic, we see children who have learning problems that seem to stem from very strong taboos about sexual matters in the home, where the child learned that there were things about which one should not ask. When a child is in an atmosphere where certain things are not supposed to be discussed, oftentimes it is very confusing because he or she then does not know where to draw the line. Sometimes the child gets the idea that knowledge is taboo, and that it is dangerous or "bad" to ask and learn about things. This situation may then be generalized to broader learning situations and can lead to learning problems.

Children who are preoccupied with sex, may on the other hand, be so stimulated that general learning is not exciting enough to entice them to leave their fantasies. Again here, consultation with a pediatrician or child psychiatrist may be in order.

Aggression along with sexuality is a basic drive in human beings. Aggression is initially only expressed directly. For example, demanding, biting and hitting are considered normal in the young toddler. Developmentally, it is normal. As infants grow into toddlerhood the hyphen between stimulus and response, in other words, between when they have the feeling they want to do something and when they do it, should lengthen. There should be increased time available to decide on more indirect and less harmful forms of aggression. Aggression does not have to be based on hostility. It does not have to be bad. Aggression, for example, is much needed when used for protection or for problem solving. Psychoanalytic theory is sometimes mistaken for advocating people being able to do whatever they feel. In fact, what is stressed, at least in psychoanalysis, is that persons should be able to think whatever they feel.

Fear of aggression leads to overpassivity, inhibitions, and often learning disabilities. On the other hand, American culture's demand for success and speeded up development probably has caused more than average frustration and thereby aggression. Although a contradiction of terms, many parents demand that their children act like adults. Professor Piaget, the famous Swiss developmentalist, has stated that when he is asked questions as to how developmental stages can be speeded up or skipped, that these questions are invariably asked by Americans. Piaget refers to questions related to speeding up children's development or to techniques that can be used to help children behave like adults, as "The American Question." This is part of our speeded up culture. While most parents say they do not like to see aggression in their children, they also want them to be better than other parents'

children in school, sports, music, etc. It should be emphasized that how a child feels in his or her family will, to a large extent, determine how he or she acts in a peer group.

By age three or four, bathroom words are often discovered. The use of these words is a less direct expression of aggression than is action, or biting. Swearing is usually what people do when they neither want to fight nor run away. Excessive parental shock at obcenities tends to either scare or reinforce the child's behavior, but it is reasonable to tell the child that most people do not like to hear these words and you would rather he or she would not use them. Such advice is considerably more forceful if the parents themselves do not use the same obcenities.

Anger is more self acceptable to most children than feelings of fear. Repetitive attacking behavior is often due to feeling of helplessness. Children want to know where the limits of acceptability are. Rules are necessary to help a child learn control. Limits should be consistent, and unnecessary limits should be avoided. However, aggression which is dangerous to people or property should be stopped. Children frighten themselves when they are allowed to lose control. Overpermissive parents may cause aggression in their children by giving the children the expectation that everything can be theirs if they persist.

In order to help a child learn to deal with aggression, it is important that the adult not pretend that it does not exist. Some parents and teachers, because of their own repression will, for example, tell the child who has just been punched in the eye that the offending child "didn't mean it." Since both children know it definitely was meant, this adult lie is very confusing.

Rather than ignoring or covering up aggression, redirecting it is more healthy. Although pounding, throwing, clay work, punching Bozo the clown, and other such actions are good ways to drain aggressivity, in order to learn something which might be of value in the future, an attempt should be made to help the child understand the feelings involved rather than simply switching them to another object. Art is a good way to express aggression, but the process, not the product, is what is important. For children, artistic endeavors often allow them to express things they cannot express any other way.

Danger signals in terms of aggression include those children who harm themselves or those who are stymied through such determined passivity that they are afraid to learn or show their independence through positive accomplishments.

Closely related to problems of aggression is the topic of discipline. Parental discipline becomes increasingly necessary during the child's second year and should be centered mainly around potentially dangerous or serious situations. One of the most important ingredients in good discipline is that the parents must know themselves what they will and will not tolerate on safety or moral grounds and be able to transmit this code to the child. However, one must be cautious in anticipating problems. Teachers, for example, learn they are more

successful if they say, "Keep your hands at your sides while in line" rather than "Don't poke the child ahead of you while in line." Repeated warnings sometimes only stimulate the child to give it a try.

Punishment at home is usually best saved for things parents really feel are important. Constant nagging over misdeeds as with the boy who cried "wolf" is soon ignored, and the child is unable to separate what are important and what are relatively unimportant issues of discipline. Long explanations or discussions of complicated codes of honor are, of course, incomprehensible to the two year old, but verbal or physical restraints should be increasingly tempered with logic as the child grows older. The goal of all discipline is self-discipline.

The development of discipline, as with all child development, is not accomplished with a big bang. It is taken in steps, mostly forward, but occasionally backward. A child who reverts to more primitive ways of doing things when under stress is reacting in a normal, expected manner. A three year old, for instance, may be reasonably well toilet trained but have accidents when frightened or worried. Discipline for these accidents most likely will make them more, rather than less, common.

Good discipline should be appropriate and consistent. Parents must first agree with each other before they can realistically expect a child to agree with either of them.

Probably the most important factor in discipline is identification. Although genes are certainly important, young children chiefly model their behavior after what they see in their parents. Parents, who are aggressive toward their children, who put forward no controls, who smilingly say they are for discipline but "boys will be boys", or who are themselves without discipline, will probably find that they have wild and uncontrollable children for whom society must eventually take over the task of disciplining.

Discipline comes from the latin, <u>disciplina</u>, meaning teaching. This is certainly appropriate. You have to teach discipline. It is not inborn. It is part of our developmental process only as we perceive we get a better deal out of life obeying forces greater than ourselves. We learn this first through experiences with our parents. If we are good, don't sass and pick up our toys, we receive more attention and recognition than if we yell, bite and throw temper tantrums. At least one hopes this is so.

There are three main approaches to discipline: persuasion, reward, and threat. The one probably most easily evoked by the word discipline is threat. If children are acting up, you make them aware of the forces at your disposal. These forces can be brought to bear in one of two ways, both of them having negative connotations. Pleasure can be taken away or displeasure given.

The second approach, that of rewards, is the mode of positive reinforcement in behavior modification systems. Here the child is offered

something if he or she complies. The disciplinarian counts on the child's greediness to substitute for the lack of conscience. It is a most uniformally successful means of discipline for the immediate goal, at least if the reward is big enough. Unfortunately, no rule of conduct is carried away by the child for future reference except that incorrect behavior gets rewarded if corrected. Blackmail may become encouraged.

The third major approach to discipline is that of persuasion. Here you must convince a child of the rightness of a way of acting. Unlike the previous two approaches, a good rapport is essential for persuasion. And because persuasion is internalized and is carried as part of the conscience, it has long range benefits as well. It is its own reward and/or punishment and thereby relatively eliminates the need for continuous external positive reinforcers or negative watchdogs. As far as threats or rewards are concerned, anyone can use these methods if the individual has enough power. In the case of persuasion, however, there has to be a relationship already established.

No child ever reaches adulthood without being amply influenced by all three approaches to discipline. There is no doubt that if the requirements can be met, persuasion is the most instructive and lasting type of discipline. If you look back on your own past experiences, those who influenced you most were undoubtedly those you remember in terms of who they were and how they treated you rather than what they gave or took away from you. It is, however, part of the complexity of the job of child rearing that different discipline approaches work better under different circumstances. For example, persuasion is seldom the most appropriate discipline for the uncontrollable child or for the child who is in immediate danger.

Danger signals in discipline are the inability of a child to accept discipline or the need of a child to seek out discipline and punishment in a compulsive and masochistic way. The latter child often becomes the scapegoat upon entering a school or other peer group setting.

Finally, the hyperactive child has become a popular but confusing entity over the past few years. Hyperactivity is a symptom, not a diagnosis. One of the greatest roadblocks to successfully treating these children is that not enough investigation is accomplished prior to medical treatment attempts. As in a reflex arc, many parents and professionals immediately link brain damage with hyperactivity, but this link is seldom so. Stimulants are too often prescribed whenever the symptom presents itself. Later many of these children are referred to our clinic as drug failures.

What kind of situations and conditions lead to the hyperactive child? Hyperactivity is a subjective judgment. It may reside mainly in the eyes of the beholder. For example, the same level of activity may cause sedate parents to label a child hyperactive, while in a boisterous household the child might be described as no more than frisky. These frisky children, however, might be labeled hyperactive once they reach school, and the teacher compares them to the more docile norm of her kindergarten class.

Indeed, many of the hyperactive children we evaluate come from hyperactive, disorganized households. Any success in structuring the family as a whole is often reflected in the quieting of the individual patient. Obviously, the converse is also often true. The successful individual treatment of the child takes pressure off the family and allows them to feel more relaxed.

Age can also be important in labeling the child hyperactive. The older children are, the more strong and mobile they are and the more destructive and annoying their hyperactivity can be. On the other hand, it is common for most children's hyperactivity to diminish before adolescence.

Space is another factor in the designation of hyperactivity. Children who may strike their mothers as very hyperactive in a three room apartment may not at all seem that way on a three acre estate. This phenomenon holds true in the classroom situation as well. A hyperactive child seems much more destructive to a teacher of thirty children than to one with only eighteen.

A perceptual handicap is only one cause for hyperactivity. From birth, these children find themselves unable to screen out unimportant or extraneous stimuli and are inundated by perceptual possibilities. I like to use the analogy of playing catch. Imagine being surrounded by a circle of fifteen or twenty players, and all of them throw a ball to you at the same time. Besides handling your concern about multiple bruises, this particular game is complicated in that you are only to catch one specific ball without having sufficient information as to which one it is. First, picture how you would feel with all those balls flying at you. Second, remember that the brain damaged child may have to continually play this kind of catch with the perceptions from the environment, and third let us think how the child may handle this dilemma. The child may wrap both arms around the head and forget about catching the right perception and just run, run, run in an attempt to get away. This is hyperactivity. Unfortunately, while one can run away from balls, the child's perceptions follow no matter how high the level of attempted flight. The second alternative for the child is to make the best attempt possible at catching the right perception. However, confronted with so many perceptions and not knowing which is the correct one, the child's attempts are very likely to be destructive, compulsive and clumsy. The third alternative for the child, is to sit down, take the lumps and make believe he or she is somewhere else. This leads to a withdrawn child.

In summary, neurologic, psychologic and environmental factors may be present in varying amounts in any hyperactive child and a proper diagnosis is essential in selecting the most appropriate approaches to treatment. In order to obtain a correct evaluation and approach to the hyperactive child, the joint efforts of the pediatrician, neurologist, social workers, psychologist, child psychiatrist and school personnel may be necessary. Often a lowering of stimulation is all that is necessary.

Here then are some of the areas in which preschool children may run into difficulties which may give rise to learning problems. Different danger signals suggest different approaches to remedies. The pediatrician is probably the person who can be most helpful as the initial resource for questions regarding mental retardation, psychological problems, or physical problems such as hearing or visual defects. All of these might provide a child with a learning disability. The pediatrician can help make the diagnosis and can also help decide if medical treatment is necessary. Finally, a pediatrician can act as a referral source to a psychologist for psychological testing, to a learning specialist for special help in teaching, or to a psychiatrist or clinic for evaluation.

Nursery school may be indicated for a child who can benefit from some time socializing with peers and being away from home. A nursery school placement is often useful if you believe your child has a learning problem, because not only does this broaden the child's experience but gives others the opportunity to make longitudinal observations. For example, the nursery school staff may be very helpful for the kindergarten teacher in deciding whether or not your child should enter school at a given age. Many children profit enormously by staying out of kindergarten until a year later than they could have entered legally. This extra year of maturation allows these children to learn more easily and may prevent them being at the low end of the class academically, a fact which may unnecessarily set the pace for their lifetime educational experiences.

EFFECTS OF TELEVISION ON YOUNG CHILDREN

Judy Silverman

My interest in the effects of television viewing on children's behavior has evolved over a period of years beginning with the time spent raising my own children and later taking on an added dimension in my role as a teacher of preschool children at The Gesell Nursery School. As a parent, I grew disturbed with my children's viewing habits. It made me increasingly uncomfortable to see them glued to a chair mesmerized by the television set. I was especially concerned with the amount of time they spent watching television. When our set broke down,I deliberately delayed getting it repaired. During that interval I noticed the children began to turn to books, to art work and to creative play using their naturally fertile imaginations along with toys, which had been unused for many months. These changes in their patterns of play pointed out to me how strongly television interferred with their lives and their ability to initiate activities, which I considered to be more healthful and stimulating.

As a teacher, my concern deepened in direct proportion to the kinds of play I observed children engaged in at school. There was a great deal of what might be seen by some as imaginative play. However, we teachers at Gesell came to realize that such play was not imaginative and creative, but was in fact a form of "perseveration". Perseveration occurs when a child, or any person, persists at the same activity, repeating it over and over to the exclusion of alternative choices. The child is "stuck", unable to resolve something and move along in his or her growth. A common example of this is the particular kinds of obsessive superhero play we were observing at school. Several children in each group appeared compelled to limit most of their free play to recreating segments of Batman, Superman, Wonderwoman or Emergency.

In dealing with these children at school, I became more and more concerned and began doing some reading and studying on the subject. That's essentially why I am here. In no way am I an authority on the subject, but from my experience with children in the nursery school environment, I have found some startling correlations between my readings and their behavior. I would like to share with you some of the highlights of what I have learned.

The primary objective of most of the studies I have read has been a concern with televised violence and aggression and its relationship to observable behavior, both in children and in adolescents. Dr. Michael Rothenberg,in an article published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in December 1975, summarized the research done to date.

There have been approximately 50 studies involving 10,000 children and adolescents. Everyone of these studies has indicated that the viewing of violence leads to increased aggression in children. Liebert and Barton in their study, found that TV contributes to aggressive behavior in "many normal children." Stein and Friedrich,in a study conducted for the National Institute of Mental Health demonstrated that viewing a

program like Batman increased aggressive reactions in subsequent play while conversely, when viewing Mister Rogers, the acknowledged champ of quality preschool programming, prosocial behavior increased in subsequent play. No one argues with the fact that TV is extremely violent. According to recent statistics, a child will have watched 15,000 hours of TV as compared with 11,000 hours of formal classroom instruction by age 18. They will have witnessed 18,000 murders alone, not to mention acts of arson, robbery, beatings, even rape.

Animated cartoons are very appealing to children. However, the facts demonstrate that they are among the most violent programs on television. Parents may be unaware of the fact that cartoons contain six times as much violence as exists in adult programming. This means that children watching cartoons are seeing an average of one act of violence per minute.

The consequences of the violence viewed in cartoons is an additional cause for concern because the injury or damage that occurs is seldom permanent. The characters are remarkably resilient! The coyote and the roadrunner, Popeye, Mighty Mouse and Bugs Bunny, to name a few of the cartoon characters which have maintained popularity over the years, are virtually indestructable. This can be confusing to the young child who is unsure of the difference between fantasy and reality. Watching programs which present an unrealistic view of injuries and death can interfere with the child's attempts to distinguish the real from the unreal. Dr. John Schowalter of the Yale University Medical School raises some interesting points with reference to death and injuries as viewed on television. Mourning and grief are seldom portrayed and rarely dealt with on TV. He feels that viewing televised deaths, injuries and destruction probably makes it harder for children to deal with the emotional impact of an actual death or injury in their own lives. On television the REAL consequences of violence are absent. For very young children especially, absence of real emotional response can cause both confusion and anxiety since the young do not yet possess the emotional and intellectual tools with which to sort out and make sense of such actions.

Concern with excessive violence on TV has inspired the formation of Action for Children's Television (ACT). It was initially formed by a group of women in the Boston area who were disturbed by the violent nature of children's programming. They have grown influential in the field and have become an important pressure group exerting influence on the quality of children's programming. I recommend that anyone interested in the subject read their book, A Family Guide to Television Viewing, by Evelyn Kaye, a Random House publication.

There has been much talk about how learning is affected by television. I am afraid it is at best a mixed blessing. Recently I attended a talk given by Dr. Jerome Singer and Dr. Dorothy Singer, both of Yale University and Co-directors of the Family Television and Consultation Center in New Haven. The Singers are interested in the effects of television on children and have jointly conducted studies in the field. In their talk, "Television and Your Child" given at the Yale

Child Study Center, January 26, 1976, they cited some of the positive learning experiences they consider possible from watching television. Dr. D. Singer pointed out that TV is useful in gathering factual information of geographical, cultural, and historical nature. Through the use of television, it is possible to build an awareness of plots and story-lines as well as teach rote number and letter recognition. Some programs, such as Mister Rogers, are concerned with the development of the preschool child's social and emotional adjustment, an area most early childhood educators consider more crucial to the child's learning at this age than the recognition of numbers and letters. Children as well as adults make use of TV as a source of pleasure and relaxation. However, Dr. Singer indicated that not only is the pleasure level especially heightened if an adult is watching a program with a child, but the presence of an adult can help minimize some of the ill effects of viewing programs beyond a young child's comprehension. The adult is available to interpret and explain ideas being presented. I know that my own children have enjoyed having me watch children's programs with them and have been sensitive to my attitudes toward what we have watched together. My reactions have served as a model for theirs. The quality of the watching experience is an important factor in evaluating whether TV has a positive or negative influence on children.

Quantity is also an issue. Some young children spend as much as six hours a day watching TV. This is more daily contact than many children have with their parents. Since different children have different needs and tolerance levels, there is no magic number to divide moderation in viewing from excess. One solution is to monitor the amount of time children watch TV. This is difficult to say the least, due to the accessibility of the set in the American home. Television has become ever-present, readily available and to many children totally absorbing.

The viewing of television is essentially a passive experience. This passivity disturbs me since first-hand activity is the cornerstone of a young child's learning. At home one day, I called up the stairs to my daughter and asked what she was doing. She answered, "I'm not doing, Im watching." She was right. Nothing is required of the viewer except open eyes and ears. TV can be pleasing or diverting for an hour or so, but often it goes on for much longer, becoming a substitute for activity necessary for growth. Teachers know that young children need to explore and manipulate, to climb, to touch and taste, to build and knock down, to move from place to place; to learn by doing. These pursuits are part of the sequence of healthy child development. Excessive TV viewing interrupts that process.

It can be said that reading a story to a child is an equally passive activity; however, reading isn't as passive as one might think. First, it requires listening. Interpretation and imagination come into play. The child must picture what is happening in the story. If need be, the reader can stop, go back and answer questions or clear up misunderstandings. The child has the companionship and security of an adult who is someone to snuggle up to. Stories can be selected with consideration given to the age and interest of the child and therefore, need not be threatening or overwhelming. In these respects reading can be considered an active pursuit.

The issue of TV and its effects on preschool children is a broad and encompassing one. Time does not permit me to deal with all aspects of the issue; however, this discussion would not be complete without some thought given to the quality of program content. To date, programs in general have proven insensitive to the developmental needs of children. Producers have failed to consider the basic principles underlying child development. There are few programs designed for a specific age group. For example, cartoons are designed for the "two to eleven year old market". Yet the differences in children's perceptions above and below approximately six years of age are complex and profuse. Public TV has done some good work in this area, and there are a few network programs which address themselves to a narrower age span. I will list some of these shows later.

Before the age of five or six, children learn best by doing a variety of things and doing them first hand through their senses. Diversity of experience and repetition of these experiences at intervals are keys to their education. In the above areas, most program content fails to meet children's vital needs; however, there are a few programs which do attempt to take into consideration basic principles of child development. For example, Sesame Street contains an element of variety and repetition as is evidenced in the quick film segments. Mr. Rogers finds many different ways to repeat the idea that each child is special and unique.

Children under six and particularly under four are easily confused. Their sense of reality and logical processes are not yet fully developed. Piaget, the Swiss developmentalist, contrasts this age group with the child over six who has moved into the realm of concrete operations in his/her thought processes. Preschool aged children explain what they don't understand by magical thinking. They can not always distinguish fantasy from reality. What they see on TV often represents the real world to them. Young children, therefore, are likely to become confused and overwhelmed when the portrayal of an event or idea is beyond their comprehension developmentally. A teacher friend told me about a three-year old who when asked how Batman flies said, "his mommy helps him". It is an amusing thought which also gives us an insight into his thinking. Around the country doctors have reported borken legs because children have tried to imitate Evil Kneivel's dramatized exploits. Children believe what they see is true, much more than we may realize.

With this in mind,I tried a simple experiment. I viewed Saturday morning programs as a three or four year old might. I relied on my background in child development and my experience with young children to put myself in the place of the young child. As I watched the cartoons and Sesame Street pretending to be three or four, I began to feel confused and out of control when the picture on the screen kept changing from one disconnected image to another. It gave me a little sense of the confusion young children are likely to feel when they are watching the usual Saturday morning offerings.

Attempts have been made by the networks, including of course public TV, to make better programming available. With careful monitoring and

selection, some good TV is available for children. The following programs are generally considered to be examples of quality television:

Mister Rogers,Neighborhood, Captain Kangaroo, Sesame Street Electric Company, Zoom, Children's Film Festival, Fat Albert, and Cosby Kids, Make a Wish, Sunday ABC Go, Vision On, In the News 1 1/2 Min., Multiplication Rock, Nature's Window, Jaques Cousteau Specials.

Television has become an established pattern on the American scene. Given this situation, it is important for parents to resolve in their minds how it will be used in their individual homes. Monitoring the time spent watching, and censoring for quality would be important first steps for those parents concerned with the impact of TV on their children's lives.

Monitoring requires some effort and a parent must be willing to take on the responsibility of being the "heavy", especially if a pattern of excessive viewing has been established. Your children may better accept your action if you can be firm and accompany the negative of turning off the TV with positive alternative suggestions such as playing with blocks, cooking, reading etc. Some parents may feel comfortable limiting TV viewing to a specified number of hours each day. Others prefer to focus on specific programs. Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, a well-known pediatrician, feels that one hour a day is maximum viewing time for preschoolers. Some parents may feel that an hour a day is too much; some may feel it is too little. The important thing is to be aware of the time and programs.

Unless you are an especially organized and consistent parent you will probably find that there are times when you are not able to supervise your child and the TV. Perhaps you have to be out of the house, have a new sitter, or just don't feel like having you child underfoot when you come home from work and are fixing the dinner or reading the paper. Parents know that the hours between three and six p.m. are often the most difficult ones of the day. We can be aiming for an overall effect of limiting television time for children, rather than a set of hard and fast rules that have no exceptions.

In my own family,I have experienced television as a problem only periodically. Every so often I begin to notice that the children are watching more TV than I am comfortable with, so I place a limit on it. It then ceases to be a problem for a month or more. Eventually, I must reinstate the limits. We all seem to be comfortable with the arrangement. Children often take their cues from their own parents' habits and so you may wish to be more conscious of how much TV you yourself are watching.

I have attempted to cover some of the current research and opinion on the effects of television, particularly violence in programming on young children. I believe we have just scratched the surface of what

effects television has on our lives and I expect to see more and more research and coverage of the problem in the press. Television cannot be ignored by most of us; it can be dealt with.

I invite you to look over a list of the Singers' guidelines on how to handle television in your home.

Singers' Guidelines

On selection and screening of programs:

1) Select and screen television programs carefully so that you know WHAT your children are viewing. Programs appropriate for older children are not necessarily appropriate for younger ones.

2) Begin by allowing children to watch programs which depict reality.

3) Try to select programs which have a unifying adult figure, like Mr. Rogers, who can help ease tension and lend stability.

4) Choose programs which contain imaginative content and appropriate adventure. Remember, however, that children need clear differentiations between reality and fantasy.

5) Determine whether the pace of the program is appropriate for your child. Is it too fast or too slow?

6) Programs containing cognitive learning and pro-social content are desirable selections.

7) AVOID:

   a. programs which present dangers and threats to animals and children.

   b. excessive and supernatural characters.

   c. direct violence

   d. dismemberment of animals (frequently shown in cartoons).

   e. dangerous exploits (daredevil shows and some cartoons).

   f. news programs with violence emphasized.

   g. monster shows.

8) WATCH:

   a. well-known historical or fairy tales (the less frightening ones)

   b. animal stories (well treated where learning can take place).

   c. cartoons dealing with realistic situations.

   d. puppetry, art, dance, and music.

   e. family "sit-coms", which in general tend to be less violent.

On the use of the television set:

1) Don't keep the television on if no one is watching.

2) Define the viewing time.

3) "Teach" your children HOW to watch television by watching with them at first.

4) Discuss what has been viewed. Help the young child verbalize what he has seen.